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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2775
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1138
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3166
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2552
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 001217

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN (GORKOWSKI), EEB/TRA (LIMAYE-DAVIS)
MOSCOW FOR FAA - STAURSETH
MONTREAL FOR ICAO OFFICER

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SUBJECT: KYRGYZ CIVIL AVIATION DIRECTOR IDENTIFIES PROBLEMS

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Classified By: CDA Lee Litzenberger, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The new Kyrgyz civil aviation director briefed the Charge December 2 about civil aviation shortcomings and the likelihood that the Kyrgyz Republic would fail a scheduled April 20 ICAO audit. The director said his personnel needed aviation safety training, and suggested that ICAO's "soft recommendations" required more direct and persuasive transmission to ensure that Kyrgyz officials and parliamentarians implemented necessary changes to bring the Kyrgyz civil aviation code into conformance with international standards. Noting his inability to act alone, he requested international community support to make these changes happen. End summary.

Civil Aviation Sector Challenges

12. (C) Alexander Nastayev, the new Director of the Civil Aviation Authority under the Kyrgyz Ministry of Transport and Communications, briefed the Charge December 2 on Kyrgyz civil aviation sector difficulties. Based on current conditions, Nastayev said that the Kyrgyz Republic would fail an April 20 International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) audit. (Note: All Kyrgyz air carriers are on a European Union blacklist due to safety deficiencies. End note.) He highlighted the need for legislative fixes and training to overcome current shortcomings, and added that existing Soviet-era equipment would only remain operable for another two-three years. Nastayev intimated that replacement equipment and aircraft would be sourced from western companies.

Aviation Safety Training

13. (C) Nastayev said he needed to develop sufficient Civil Aviation Authority expertise, and hoped to secure aviation safety training for three employees. (Note: Most Kyrgyz air

traffic originates from Bishkek's Manas International Airport, which is co-located with the Manas Coalition Airbase. End note.) He added that he would be meeting with the World Bank and European Union representatives in the coming weeks to gauge their abilities to provide training and related assistance.

A Stronger Directive from ICAO

¶4. (C) Nastayev turned to 60 "soft recommendations" ICAO personnel had recently forwarded to Kyrgyz officials in advance of the April audit. He said these recommendations required changes to the Kyrgyz aviation code, and included the need to incorporate provisions of the 1944 Chicago Convention on international civil aviation. However, Nastayev lamented that the Kyrgyz "mentality" required a more persuasive, direct message from ICAO to ensure that the parliament adopts necessary measures in a timely manner. "I can't hit the wall alone," he argued and reiterated the need for outside support for these changes. Nastayev said he could not communicate this need to ICAO in writing, but planned to visit ICAO personnel January 15 and planned to present his case personally. He concluded by noting that the Kyrgyz parliament would be reviewing the Kyrgyz aviation code in late January, and opined that if Kyrgyz parliamentarians and officials became more aware of Kyrgyz deficiencies vis-a-vis international requirements then Kyrgyz action would be expedited.

Comment

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¶5. (C) Nastayev seems to believe that it will take international pressure, as well as international assistance in training and equipment, to bring about reforms to Kyrgyzstan's civil aviation sector. Nastayev's outreach to the Embassy could represent an opportunity to improve relations with Kyrgyz civil aviation authorities who have routine interaction with Manas Airbase operations. At the conclusion of the meeting, Nastayev said he would be open to discuss other aviation issues with the Embassy in the future.

We will review what options might be available to help improve flight safety and operations at Manas airport, and would welcome more encouragement from ICAO officials to ensure Kyrgyz action in making their air code compliant with international standards.

LITZENBERGER